

CAPACITANCE METER

At left, an employee of Anders Precision Instruments Company, Willimantic, Connecticut is assembling a circuit board for a new capacitance meter being produced by the company. The meter (below) is used to test capacitors, devices used in electrical circuits for temporary storage of electrical charge; the meter measures the capacitance, or the quantity of charge that can be stored for a given voltage. Anders Precision's customers for capacitance meters are primarily electronic hobbyists; the company also supplies meters for service technicians and for a variety of industrial applications.

Anders Precision's original meter could not measure dissipation—leakage—in a capacitor. Seeking to add that capability, the company planned an advanced model. Before initiating development work, company president Thomas Anderson sought technical assistance from NASA's New England Research Application Center (NERAC) at the University of Connecticut, Storrs, Connecticut. Specifically, he asked for a survey of the status and capabilities of electronic measuring instruments.

NERAC conducted a computerized search of six data bases, including NASA's, and provided a comprehensive report on the state of the art worldwide. Anderson reports that NERAC's assistance saved him considerable research time and capital, provided assurance of the uniqueness and competitiveness of his own design, and contributed to a meter superior to his company's earlier product.

